

10.55 p.m., V.E. Day, 8th May 1945, Tuesday 53 Uvedale Road

There is a miniature barrage of fireworks exploding outside (only like large caps, not coloured light affairs), and I don't feel like going to bed at once. It is so warm and there are sounds of people talking and fireworks going on, and the big bonfire over by our allotment off Bush Hill is still smouldering. About five houses in Whitethorne Gardens have got coloured fairy lights alight in their porches and are floodlit and they are showing up the flags. Yesterday, which seems ages ago to me, we went to work in the ordinary way. There had been various Wartime Instructions about the 2 days' holiday on cessation of hostilities in Europe and of course everyone knew that V.E. day was coming any minute. One of Miss Woodgate's friends in Outside Broadcasting rang her and told her several days ago that they had got the microphones fixed up in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's etc. all ready, and yesterday Mr. Bell was certain that V.E. Day would be announced by 4 o'clock that afternoon. It wasn't, although at lunch time we noticed lots of flags beginning to be hung out. Broadcasting House had had 3 flag poles out under the Director General's room for several days. Terry wanted to ask for half a bisque on Thursday afternoon but didn't want to waste her leave if it might be a holiday then, and we were all hoping the announcement would be made early in the day so that we would get plenty of holiday. Whenever the forces news started at the music while you work factory opposite us, we pricked up our ears but couldn't hear very much. Woodgate and Iris hung a flag outside our window, the only one on Bentinck House although Wells wanted to have one too. In the evening going home all seemed quite normal and quiet except for the flags and bunting but there wasn't all that much really, but I read over someone's shoulder in the tube that Germany had signed the unconditional surrender terms. I dashed home, all on edge to hear the news, and a girl called out from her bicycle on Bush Hill to another woman "Have you heard the news? It's all over". Otherwise it was all ordinary. On the 9 o'clock news we heard that the official announcement would be made tomorrow at 3 o'clock by the Prime Minister and the King would speak at night. This morning I knitted my green jumper and went for a short bike ride to see the flags but had to dash back because it started raining and I remembered Churchill's speech at 3 p.m. First thing in the morning Alan and I went to get the fats ration and cheese and collect the grocery because shops only stayed open for 2 hours. The town looked very gay with flags and bunting. Last night Mr. Newman kept hammering in his flag and someone was practising on a bugle nearby. There were several terrific thunderstorms in the night. I thought it would ruin the flags and make the park tennis courts unfit for dancing on, but it didn't. This evening I went for a walk round the town with Alan and at 7 p.m. went to thanksgiving service at St. Paul's Presbyterian at 8 p.m. People were already beginning to collect in the Enfield Town park then. I wore my new red jumper with white spots to look gay. Most people wore red, white and blue in some form or another - rosettes, V's, hair ribbons (people were scrambling for hair ribbons in Oxford Street Woolworths yesterday). All the girls in Sainsbury's wore ribbons etc. Church quite full for thanksgiving, decent choir, singing very good. Now thank we all our God, God is our refuge and our strength, For all the Saints, Blake's Jerusalem Church bells from St Andrews, Enfield. Yvonne Ratcliffe went dancing at Russells dancing school, Lincoln Road. Big bonfire by our allotment (too near ours for safety) Sparks thrown very high, tarred wood. Flood-lit tennis courts, dancing and crowds in the town park. Alan and I watched till 10.30 p.m. Fire crackers kept going off too close for safety. I couldn't get off to sleep because the house opposite was so floodlit and every now and then a loud cracker went off. I hurried home from church to hear the King's speech, and took it and Mr. Churchill's down in shorthand.